

RENAISSANCE ISSUE

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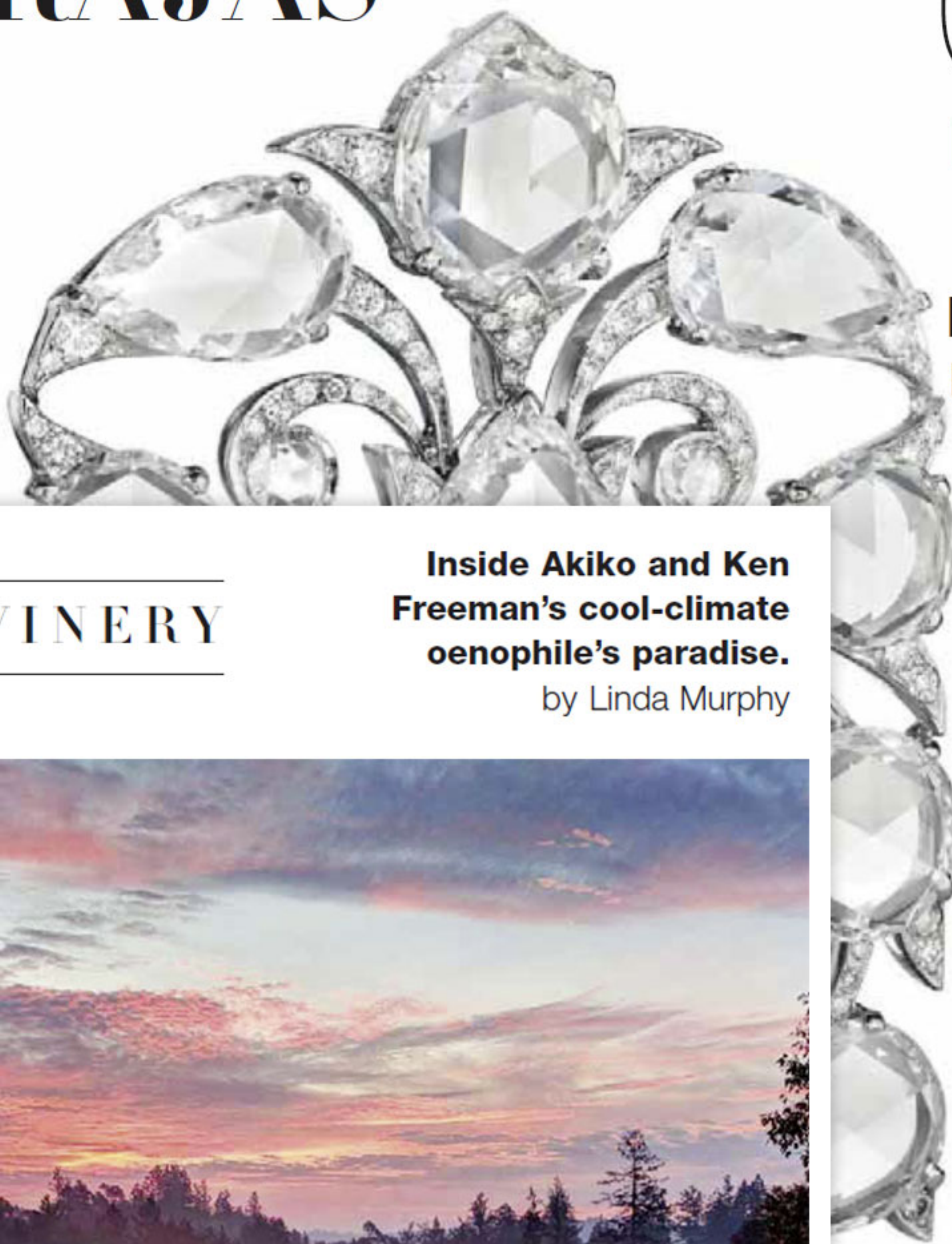
DEFINING THE LUXURY EXPERIENCE

Treasures of the MAHARAJAS

VIENNA CHIC

LEGENDARY BARS

MADE IN ITALY Bugatti & Lamborghini



FREEMAN WINERY

**Inside Akiko and Ken
Freeman's cool-climate
oenophile's paradise.**
by Linda Murphy



Westerly Winds

CAME IN FROM THE COLD
Y IN MEXICO
ND ADVICE



Westerly Winds

Fog from the nearby Pacific keeps the Freeman vineyards chilled and helps to create sophisticated pinots noirs and chardonnays.

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Inside Akiko and Ken Freeman's cool-climate oenophile's paradise.

by Linda Murphy

COOL BREEZE—*RYO FU* IN JAPANESE—WAFTS OVER AKIKO AND KEN FREEMAN'S WINERY, VINEYARDS, AND HOME IN SONOMA COUNTY'S RUSSIAN RIVER VALLEY. They and their grape-growing neighbors in Sebastopol embrace the chilling Pacific winds, which refresh the vines and produce the bracing yet rewarding chardonnays and pinots noirs for which Freeman Vineyard & Winery is known.

So vital are these breezes that Freeman pays homage with its Ryo-Fu Chardonnay, a multi-vineyard blend. In fact, all the Freeman wines are positively influenced by ocean winds and fog, so much so that each can be counted on to deliver energetic fruit flavors, mouthwatering acidity, vibrant finishes, and overall elegance.

The luxuriant entrance to Freeman Vineyard & Winery.



Akiko and Ken started Freeman Vineyard & Winery in 2001. He was raised on the East Coast, she in Tokyo; they met at a party in New York in 1985. Akiko had just arrived in the US, her father having passed on his knowledge of Burgundy-style wines to her. Her love of chardonnay and pinot noir mirrored international businessman Ken's tastes, and the topic was the launchpad for their romance, marriage, and eventual founding of the winery.

After apprenticing with consulting winemaker Ed Kurtzman, Akiko now produces the wines in the Freeman cave, with a less-is-more hand. Harvesting at just the right moment in the relatively cool conditions preserves the grapes' natural acidity, and her judicious use of new French-oak barrels for fermentation and aging ensures the wines will have broad palate texture, without the overt toast aromas and flavors that new French oak can impart.

The Freemans balance estate-grown grapes with purchased fruit for their wines. Their first estate vineyard, Gloria, at the winery, is a former apple orchard named for Hurricane Gloria, the storm that led to their party meet-up in 1985. The pinot noir it produces is, well, glorious.



Also in 2007, the couple acquired property near Occidental, a cold, windy, and steep site just five miles from the ocean and surrounded by old redwoods. The vineyard they planted there, in the Sonoma Coast AVA, is named Yu-ki—Japanese for “big tree.” Its pinots are firm, lean, and savory when young, yet blossom beautifully with age.

Also not to miss: Akiko's Cuvée, a blend of her favorite barrels of pinot noir, and KR Ranch Pinot Noir from the Keefer Ranch Vineyard.

The Freemans are fans of—and investors in—the Single Thread Farm-Restaurant-Inn in Healdsburg, awarded three Michelin stars in 2019 for its eleven-course, Japanese-influenced kaiseki tasting menu. Says Akiko: “We attended a fundraiser for Sonoma Land Trust in 2015, where Kyle Connaughton prepared an amazing meal, using only a campfire. This was two years before Kyle and his wife, Katina, opened Single Thread. We found a group of friends to invest.”

Umami abounds on the Single Thread menu, and Freeman pinots noirs are great mates for the cuisine.

Freeman offers tastings by appointment, at \$30 per person. 1300 Montgomery Road, Sebastopol, CA, 707-823-6937, freemanwinery.com. ☼



Above: Tokyo-born winemaker Akiko Freeman oversees a small, dedicated team to shepherd each wine from vine to glass. At left: The Freemans' wine cave.